

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 – 7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously Presented) A method of controlling an extrusion molding system which comprises a die having an opening including a first part with an unvariable shape and a second part with a variable shape, an extruder which feeds a material to the die, a first gear pump arranged between the die and the extruder, a branch part arranged upstream of the first and second parts of the opening of the die which divides the die into a first passage connected with the first part of the opening for supplying the material and a second passage connected with the second part of the opening for supplying the material, and a valve mechanism arranged in the second passage, wherein the valve mechanism adjusts a flow rate of the second passage, and being arranged to fully close the second passage when the second part is fully closed, the method comprising:

conducting a first sequence control to change the shape of the second part of the opening;

conducting a second sequence control to change a rotation speed of the first gear pump in synchronism with the change in the shape of the second part of the opening; and

opening and closing the valve mechanism within a width of the second passage to control an amount of the material to be supplied to the first and second passages.

9. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 8, further comprising:

conducting a third sequence control to change a rotation speed of the extruder in synchronism with the change in the rotation speed of the first gear pump.

10. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the third sequence control is conducted such that a timing of starting and stopping the change in the rotation speed of the extruder is advanced with respect to a timing of starting and stopping the change in the rotation speed of the first gear pump.

11. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the system further comprises a pressure sensor arranged at an inlet of the first gear pump,

the method further comprising:

conducting a feedback control to maintain substantially constant a pressure indicated by the pressure sensor.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Withdrawn) A method of controlling an extrusion molding system which comprises a die having a first opening with an unvariable shape and a second opening with a variable shape, an extruder which feeds a material to the die, a first gear pump arranged between the die and the extruder, a second gear pump arranged between the die and the extruder, the second gear pump being connected in series to the first gear pump, a main passage which connects the first and second gear pumps, the main passage being connected to the first opening of the die, and a bypass passage connected to the main passage between the first and second gear pumps, the bypass passage being connected to the second opening of the die, the method comprising:

conducting a first sequence control to change the shape of the second opening; and

conducting a second sequence control to change a rotation speed of the first gear pump in synchronism with the change in the shape of the second opening.

14. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in claim 13, further comprising:

conducting a third sequence control to change a rotation speed of the extruder in synchronism with the change in the rotation speed of the first gear pump.

15. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the third sequence control is conducted such that a timing of starting and stopping the change in the rotation speed of the extruder is advanced with respect to a timing of starting and stopping the change in the rotation speed of the first gear pump.

16. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein the system further comprises a pressure sensor arranged at an inlet of the first gear pump,

the method further comprising:

conducting a feedback control to maintain substantially constant a pressure indicated by the pressure sensor.

17. (Withdrawn) The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein the material is thermoplastic elastomer.

18. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the valve mechanism comprises a rod; and wherein a movement of the rod in the second passage varies from a zero protrusion amount to a maximum protrusion amount.

19. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the material is thermoplastic elastomer.

20. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 19, wherein the material is thermoplastic olefin or styrenic block copolymers.

21. (New) The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the valve mechanism adjusts a flow rate of the second passage such that second part of the opening is varied from a maximum cross section when the second passage is fully opened to a zero cross section when the second passage is fully closed.